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U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE LOCAL 4-H CLUB LEADER - A BUILDER

RADIO TALK - NATIONAL 4-H CLUB RADIO PROGRAM

Saturday, December 5, 1936.

R. A. Turner.

How do you do, 4-H club folks!

The hundreds of thousands of 4-H club members throughout our nation who are listening to this broadcast have just heard the young lady and the young man who won the Moses' Leadership Trophy for the present year. Our congratulations to them as representative club leaders. All 4-H club folks regret the inability of their friend, Mr. Horace A. Moses, donor of the trophies, to take his accustomed place on this annual 4-H leadership broadcast.

Since this is a 4-H leadership program, I am sure that all of you 4-H club members will want to join with me in paying our tribute to the volunteer leaders of the 4-H clubs throughout the United States. We all have long recognized that these leaders occupy one of the key positions in the 4-H club movement. May I quote a significant statement relative to club leadership made in a recent public address? This is the statement, quoting: "Local leaders of 4-H clubs have a greater opportunity than any group today to exert the most potential influence upon rural life in America. How important it is, therefore, that they be the proper individuals." End of quote. Since, under their guidance, the 4-H clubs have developed so steadily, it is evident that their influence has already been felt in rural America. And so to you, volunteer local club leaders of America, all 4-H club folks pay their tribute.

At the present time there are over 106,000 volunteer 4-H club leaders in the United States who give unselfishly of their time and thought and effort to the 4-H clubs in their neighborhoods. Most of these leaders are busy farmers or farmers' wives, many are engaged in other occupations, and still others are rural young people above 4-H club age.

Now let us look at the size of the job in which these leaders are engaged. The total number of 4-H club members in the United States this year is over 1,000,000. There are approximately 6,000,000 boys and girls 10 to 21 years of age living on farms and about 5,000,000 more living in rural towns and villages. These figures indicate that during this year one out of every 11 rural boys or girls came under the direct influence of a local 4-H club leader.

But there is another way of stating the comparative size of the 4-H club enrollment. On the average, members continue in club work between two and a half and three years, and there are approximately 407,000 boys and girls who each year enroll in a 4-H club for the first time. The number of rural young people reaching the 10th year of age is about 1,200,000 each year. Based on these figures, it is estimated that at some time between the ages of 10 and 21, one out of every three of all rural boys and girls is a member of a 4-H club. To a great educational movement like the 4-H club this information is significant. It illustrates how tremendous a factor local club leadership is in this phase of cooperative extension work in agriculture and

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home economics. The local leader is a veritable builder in the 4-H club structure. It must be remembered, also, that the influence of these leaders does not stop with the club member, but is carried on indirectly to other rural young people not members of a 4-H club.

A very gratifying development is the interest shown by club members, as they pass the maximum age limit, in becoming leaders of clubs of younger members. This trend is most heartening. These young folks recognize what the club program has meant to them and they desire to make it possible for others to obtain similar training and experience. Each year an ever-increasing number of former 4-H club members join the ranks of the adult club leaders.

The fact that club leaders desire to be even better prepared to do their work is shown in their loyal attendance at the county 4-H leader conferences. All of our experience seems to prove that these leader conferences, as conducted by the county extension agents or the specialists from the State college of agriculture, constitute one of the most workable means of increasing the volume and bettering the quality of the club program in the counties. It is to the credit of the local club leaders that they assume this professional attitude toward their job.

The volunteer 4-H club leader, through the medium of extension teaching, through recreation, through music, and through the creation of ambition, opens a new world of opportunity to rural young people; the opportunity for them to become the most forward-looking, the most cooperative, and the most cultured citizens of the United States.

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